

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries:	IFA, IFA-RA, IKA, IKB-RA, IKC-RA, ISB-RA, JEA-RA, KBA-RA
Related Sources:	Montgomery County Public Schools <i>Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual</i> ; <i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004</i> , 34 CFR Section 300.320; <i>Code of Maryland Regulations</i> §13A.05.01.09(B)
Responsible Office:	Curriculum and Instructional Programs

Grading and Reporting

I. PURPOSE

To align grading and reporting practices with the curriculum and assessments of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the State of Maryland in order to accurately document and report student achievement

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Body of evidence* is a collection of aligned instructional tasks used to determine if a student has met identified standards or goals.
- B. *Countywide final examination* is an end-of-course assessment administered to all students enrolled in that course.
- C. *Course expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge the student should attain by the end of a middle or high school course.
- D. *Course team* is all teachers in a school who teach the same course.
- E. *Final evaluation activity* is an assessment administered at the end of a course that determines whether students understand and can apply what has been taught; provides students the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge/skills on which they have had time to practice; is based on known criteria; focuses primarily on individual student performance; integrates important skills and knowledge; and may take the form of teacher- or system-designed examinations, papers, projects, and/or performance tasks such as discussion, recitation, simulation construction, movement, procedure or application.

- F. *Final examination* is a type of final evaluation that may include a written response with short answer or essay questions.
- G. *Formative Assessment* is an assessment used during the course of instruction that measures student mastery of specific indicators and is used by teachers to inform and guide subsequent instruction.
- H. *Fundamental Life Skills* is a curriculum aligned with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) alternative outcomes.
- I. *Grade level expectations* are statements of skills and knowledge that elementary students should attain in a subject by the end of a grade; what an elementary student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade level in a specific subject, as outlined in the grade/subject curriculum.
- J. *Marking period* is an approximately nine-week period, or quarter, at the end of which individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.
- K. *Semester* is an approximately 18-week period comprised of two nine-week marking periods, or quarters, at the end of which individual student's achievement of the concepts and skills taught during that period is reported.
- L. *Special populations* are groups of students who may require instructional adjustments, accommodations, or modifications to their instructional programs based on learning needs and strengths.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Evidence of Student Learning

Consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, teachers will use a variety of assessment approaches over time to create a body of evidence and monitor student learning of the MCPS curriculum. Student grades will be based on the collected body of evidence.

1. The body of evidence may include assessment products such as unit assessments, papers, projects, quizzes or tests, and/or performance tasks such as discussion, recitation, simulation, construction, movement, procedure, or demonstration of a skill.
2. The body of evidence may not include work assigned for practice or preparation for instruction, except as described in MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures*, and published procedures.

B. Grades

1. Grades must be based on individual demonstration of skill and understanding.
2. Grades for elementary content areas are based on evidence of the attainment of assigned grade level or course expectations.
3. Grades for middle and high school courses are based on evidence of attainment of course expectations.
4. Grade level and course expectations are outlined in curriculum documents and discussed in section III.D below.
5. Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), special educators, and general education teachers who provide instruction for a student will collaboratively examine evidence collected to determine a student's grade.
6. Attendance and tardiness are not calculated in the grade. In high school, school staff will follow procedures outlined in MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*.
7. Permissible grade symbols and scales used on report cards are set forth in the *Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual*.

C. Reporting Student Achievement

1. Report Cards
 - a) Report cards summarize evidence of student achievement collected throughout the marking period and include the following:
 - (1) Grades, consistent with the required grading scale, indicating student achievement on grade level/course expectations;
 - (2) Attendance, consistent with MCPS Regulation JEA-RA, *Student Attendance*; and
 - (3) Students' Learning Skills for students in kindergarten through Grade 8.

- b) Parents of students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) will receive supplemental information on progress toward the attainment of IEP goals at the time report cards are issued, consistent with federal and state requirements.
- c) At the elementary level, report cards indicate adjustments to grade level expectations.
 - (1) The report card will reflect the student's actual instructional level and achievement of assigned indicators in reading and math.
 - (2) Parents of ESOL students will receive supplemental information on their student's performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing based on expectations that are appropriate to their English language proficiency level.

2. Formal reporting varies by grade level as follows:

- a) Prekindergarten teachers report student achievement to parents in parent conferences and narrative reports.
- b) Report cards for kindergarten students are issued at the end of the first semester and at the end of the year. One parent/teacher conference is required by midyear. An end-of-year conference is recommended for parents of students who are not meeting or who are exceeding expectations.
- c) Reporting for Grades 1–5 is as follows:
 - (1) Report cards for students in Grades 1–5 are issued at the end of each marking period.
 - (2) In Grades 1–5, one parent/teacher conference is required during the first semester. Additional parent/teacher conferences are recommended for students who are not meeting or who are exceeding expectations.
- d) Reporting for middle and high schools is as follows:
 - (1) Report cards for students in Grades 6–12 are issued at the end of each marking period.

- (2) Interim reports may be sent for all students but must be sent to the parent of each student who is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
 - (3) Interim reports are sent between the fourth and sixth weeks of the marking period. If a student shows a marked decline in achievement later in the marking period, the teacher must inform the parent of this decline.
 - (4) Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged when a student is in danger of failing or of dropping more than one letter grade from the previous marking period.
3. Teachers are encouraged to communicate informally with the parent via phone calls, e-mails or password-protected sites on the MCPS website.
 4. Teachers or parents may request additional conferences as needed to discuss student progress or concerns.
 5. Teachers will use an electronic grade book and classroom-to-home communication systems selected, deployed and supported by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer in accordance with procedures published in the *Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual*.

D. Grade Level and Course Expectations

The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP) is responsible for developing curricula consistent with MCPS Regulation IFA-RA, *Curriculum*, that establish grade level expectations at the elementary level and course expectations at the middle and high school levels aligned with MSDE standards and assessments.

1. All students will be considered diploma bound and will be assessed and graded accordingly unless and until an IEP team determines that a student will be instructed, assessed, and graded based upon the Fundamental Life Skills curriculum, leading to a Certificate of Completion.
2. Procedures for adjusting assigned curricula for elementary students not on grade level will be developed by OCIP, in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and Student Services, and approved by the deputy superintendent of schools.

E. School Procedures

1. The offices of School Performance and OCIP will collaboratively implement procedures established by the deputy superintendent of schools to monitor implementation of Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, including review and/or change of grades.
2. Principals are responsible for the following:
 - a) Ensuring that grading and reporting procedures are applied consistently within their school. The principal designates the school leadership team to assist in developing and monitoring school level grading and reporting processes including:
 - (1) The principal or designee may require consistent processes throughout the school; but
 - (2) Grade level or course teams or departments must establish consistent grading processes as described in E.3 below.
 - b) Reviewing grading and reporting procedures with staff during pre-service days;
 - c) Communicating grading and reporting information in writing to parents at the beginning of each semester or when procedures change;
 - d) Designating a staff member to serve as the school contact for grading and reporting concerns and communicating the name of the contact to students, staff, parents, and OCIP at the beginning of each school year. The staff contact is responsible for facilitating communication and providing a timely response to grading and reporting questions as follows:
 - (1) Redirecting questions to appropriate school staff members when questions are specific to an individual student's grade;
 - (2) Informing the principal or designee of recurring questions, and questions about policy and procedures; and
 - (3) Forwarding unanswered or recurring questions to OCIP.

3. Grade level or course team teachers are responsible for collaborating to establish consistency among the following:
 - a) The body of evidence upon which students' grades are based;
 - b) Weighting of assessments, if appropriate;
 - c) The method and schedule for reteaching and reassessment opportunities as described in Section III.F.3 below;
 - d) The extent to which homework counts toward the marking period grade in middle and high school courses, consistent with MCPS Regulation IKB-RA, *Homework Procedures* and published procedures;
 - e) Due dates, deadlines, and late work procedures in middle and high school courses in accordance with published procedures.
4. Teachers are responsible for the following:
 - a) Communicating expectations in writing for each course, subject, or grade level to students and parents;
 - b) Returning graded work to students as described in Section III.H.;
 - c) Allowing makeup work, regardless of the reason for the student's absence. Teachers may assign an equivalent, but different task or assessment to students when they return from any absence. For unlawful absences, teachers may deny credit for missed assignments or assessments in accordance with the process approved by the principal and the leadership team; and
 - d) Using grade scales, which may include letters, numbers or symbols, as approved by the deputy superintendent of schools.
5. The following grading practices are prohibited:
 - a) Awarding extra credit and/or bonus points;
 - b) Forcing grades into a normal frequency distribution or any other kind of curve that compares students in relation to others;
 - c) Establishing rating scales that compare students in relation to others (sliding scales are not permitted); or

- d) Assigning a grade lower than 50 percent to a task/assessment. However, if a student does no work on the task/assessment, the teacher will assign a zero. If a teacher determines the student did not attempt to meet the basic requirements of the task/assessment or the student engaged in academic dishonesty, the teacher may assign a zero.

F. Pre-assessment, Formative Assessment, and Reassessment

- 1. Pre-assessments are designed to determine what students know and can do in order to plan instruction.
 - a) Pre-assessments are administered before instruction and may include teacher- and system-designed assessments.
 - b) Pre-assessments may be recorded but cannot be used in the body of evidence to determine a student's marking period or final grade.
- 2. Formative assessments may be included in the body of evidence.
- 3. Reassessment

Elementary and secondary students are provided opportunities for reassessments after reteaching in accordance with published procedures.

G. Final Evaluation

A final evaluation is required at the conclusion of all high school courses. Final evaluation activities in middle school courses are implemented in accordance with the *Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual*.

- 1. Requirements for Final Evaluations:
 - a) A final examination will be given in high school courses in English, foreign languages, information technology/computer science, mathematics, science and social studies.
 - (1) In courses for which a countywide final examination has been developed, the final examination administered must be the countywide examination.
 - (2) Final examination exemptions are provided to students taking externally developed and scored examinations, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, in

accordance with the *Grading and Reporting Procedures Manual*.

- b) The final evaluations for high school courses in content areas not listed above may be developed by the course team. The same final evaluations will be administered for all sections of a course taught within the same school.
- c) Seniors are not required to take the final examination for a spring semester course, but are required to complete a final evaluation.

2. Weight of final evaluations

- a) Grades for final evaluations or final examinations for high school seniors are calculated into the fourth marking period average and count 25 percent of the fourth marking period grade.
- b) Final examinations in high school courses in English, foreign languages, information technology/computer science, mathematics, science, and social studies will be calculated as 25 percent of the final grade for the semester.
- c) Except as specified above, the grade for final evaluations in high school courses is part of the grade for that marking period and counts no more than 25 percent of the second or fourth marking period grade as determined by the course team.

H. Return of Graded Work

- 1. Graded work should be returned to students as soon as it is feasible.
- 2. When tests are computer scored or have answer sheets separate from test questions, students must have an opportunity to review their answers with test questions in hand. This shall not be construed so as to require teachers to return all quizzes and tests permanently as specified below.
- 3. Students may retain graded work for their own later review and are encouraged to take work home to share with their parents. Exceptions are noted below:
 - a) Unit assessments and final examinations, after student review in class, may be retained by the teacher if the questions are needed for future test construction, and therefore, security of test items must be maintained.

- b) Teachers may temporarily retain graded work for review with parents, as is common practice in elementary schools, or may temporarily retain selected work for portfolio entry, as is the practice in some classes such as art and English.
4. Upon request by individual parents, teachers will make available to parents tests and quizzes given during the course or marking period so that parents can review student progress.

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